

June 2025

# THE VOICE

## *Freedom*



Peoples Church Unitarian Universalist  
4980 Gordon Ave. NW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52405

# Minister Musings

When my wife Bev and I were crossing the border back into Iowa from Wisconsin, I noticed the sign above the highway stating: “Welcome to Iowa: Freedom to Flourish.”

My cynical thoughts immediately labeled the sign “ironic” given all the anti-immigrant, anti-trans, anti-education, anti-environmental legislation that’s been passed lately. I said to myself, “*Freedom’ and ‘Flourish’ for whom?!*”

Thankfully, I am invited to move beyond my cynicism by turning towards our [Shared UU Values](#). Through our Unitarian Universalist faith, we are reminded of Interdependence – that none of us is free unless all of us are free. We are reminded of Equity – that when everyone is able to flourish, then we are all flourishing. We are reminded of a Liberating Love – that calls us to strive for Justice and Generosity within a heritage of Transformation.

As you engage with June’s theme on the [Practices of Freedom](#), I invite you to keep in mind and heart this distinction about freedom:

Our Unitarian Universalist faith, at its best, never simply asks us, “What do you need to get away from?” Rather, it pushes us to ask the deeper question of “**What is it that you want to move toward?**” As our Soul Matters partners put it: “Mature freedom is never about the absence of all constraints; it’s about being able to commit yourself to the things that have your heart.”

While I seek freedom from cynicism, I simultaneously commit to moving towards a Liberating Love, for there is more spiritual freedom in that practice.

How might *you* commit yourself to the things that have your heart?

Growing in Faith,

*Rev. Carin*

Rev. Carin



p.s. I am pleased to welcome Bridget Laflin as our Interim Director of Faith Formation. Please see Page 5 for more information about Bridget.





# Sunday Worship

**Sunday, June 1, 2025 @ 11:00 a.m.**

**“God Doesn’t Hate Me” led by Emily Hoselton, PCUU member**

Because it’s true that “words have power,” it is important for us to consider *when* and *how much* to allow *other peoples’ words* to have power over us. As hard as it may be, there is a clear sense of freedom when we believe our own words of love and belonging more than others’ words of hate and damnation.

**Sunday, June 8, 2025 @ 11:00 a.m.**

**“Ribbons of Freedom” led by Rev. Carin Bringelson**

On this Sunday before Cedar Rapids celebrates Juneteenth, the Social Justice Team will share the interactive art project that Peoples Church facilitated at last year’s summer festivals. Come prepared to explore a range of stories about and experiences with freedom. What does freedom mean to you in 2025?

**Sunday, June 15, 2025 @ 11:00 a.m.**

**“Personal Freedom” led by Deborah Booth, PCUU member**

This is a time of chaos. Many of our freedoms are being limited or taken away. But instead of giving in to anger and sadness, we need to find our personal freedom, find our voice, and rise above.

**Sunday, June 22, 2025 @ 11:00 a.m.**

**“Meeting the Moment: General Assembly 2025” hosted by Rev. Rosie Rimrodt**

As part of General Assembly 2025 taking place in Baltimore this week, the Rev. Dr. Nicole C. Kirk (she/her), of Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago, IL will lead this special worship service. We will watch it at Peoples Church together.

**Sunday, June 29, 2025 @ 11:00 a.m.**

**“Spiritual Lives of Freedom Fighters” led by Rev. Carin Bringelson**

Freedom fighters are sometimes idealized and elevated to a mythical status. Yet, when we examine their lives as human beings, we can gain insight into how their spiritual lives provide the resources to persevere.

# Board President

## New Year, New Board

Please join me in welcoming a new Board of Trustees at Peoples Church! Every year, a new group of leaders comes together to continue the work of guiding our faith community with fresh perspectives, renewed energy, and a shared sense of purpose.



We get to start by getting to know each other—not just names and roles, but how we think, how we communicate, and what we value. Building trust and connection is essential for group collaboration, and working together on a project or a team is one of the best ways I've found for doing just that.

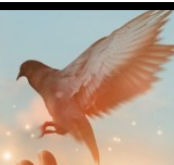
Our first opportunities for this foundational work are the June and July meetings, when we'll start getting everyone into the flow of the business side of things. But we do more than review reports and approve minutes at our monthly meetings.

We also discuss what kind of a church we want to be and what our hopes for the future are. That's why we ask you to take the time to share your thoughts with us, for example through the Priorities for Peoples discussions in 2024. We want to reflect on the ideas and hopes of our faith community as a whole, not just our piece of it.

Then in August, we'll take a deeper dive during our annual board retreat. This is our chance to step back from the day-to-day and ask the bigger questions. We'll talk about vision, mission, and how we can support the vibrant life of our congregation in meaningful ways. It's a time for reflection, planning, and a little bit of fun, too.

I'm looking forward to a fantastic year ahead. Whether you're a longtime member or brand new to Peoples Church, we hope you'll feel that energy and join us in shaping what comes next.

Let's do this—together!





## A Warm Hello from Your New Director of Faith Formation for Children and Youth

Hi everyone! I'm Bridget Laflin, and I'm so excited to be stepping into the role of Interim Director of Faith Formation for children and youth here at your congregation.

I've had the joy of working in Unitarian Universalist religious education for many years now, most recently as the Director of Lifespan Religious Education at First UU Church of San Antonio from 2022-2024, and before that at Woodinville UU Church in Washington. I've recently completed a ministerial internship at the UU Society of Iowa City. My background includes a Master of Divinity from Seattle University and a whole lot of hands-on experience with worship, teaching, multigenerational programming, and supporting families through all kinds of transitions.

Throughout my work, I've always been drawn to spaces where kids and youth are invited to be their full, curious, creative selves. I believe faith formation should be grounded, inclusive, joyful, and full of real-life questions—supported by a loving community that helps each person discover their own spiritual path. I also find that my 20+ years of experience teaching and performing improv comedy has been incredibly helpful in encouraging imagination, collaboration and joy in UU spaces.

A little bit about me outside of work: I live with my husband, our adult daughter, and three cats who keep life interesting. Our son is off at college in Massachusetts. I'm a lifelong *Star Trek* fan (exploring strange new worlds feels very UU, if you ask me), and I make mosaic art out of LEGO bricks, a meditative and creative activity.

I'm so looking forward to getting to know you and your families. Since we don't have formal Faith Formation classes this summer, please stop in and visit me if you have a chance. My office hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 9AM -2PM. And I will be here most Sunday mornings beginning on June 8. Whether we're lighting a chalice together, asking big questions in FF class, being silly together, or sharing snacks after worship, I'm grateful to be here and excited for what we'll grow together.

Peace and Laughter,  
Bridget

p.s. This summer, I hope to see you all at one of these summer events!

PCUU Camping Trip June 20-22

Pride Parade: July 13

Wikiup family nature gathering: TBA

Cherry Hill Pool Party: TBA



PCUU SUMMER 2025

# QUILT PROJECT

**SPONSORED BY  
FAITH FORMATION**

Our tapestry of faith binds us together. Join us by contributing to our community quilt project.

Create art on a  
provided quilt  
square!

**QUILT SQUARES DUE  
AUGUST 1ST**

Return completed squares to Faith Formation Director's mailbox.

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:**

- Blank white square provided.
- Quilt will be hung in FF play space.
- Multimedia art encouraged, no sewing required.

Contact Megan with questions and/or if craft supplies are needed.  
Megan.teamjones@gmail.com

## YOUTH CO-OP CALENDAR



June:

- ✓ 6/8: Service Project and Ice Cream!
- ✓ 6/22-6/27: Summer Trip to St. Louis



**July 12, 2025**

Want to join us in the Parade? Talk to Emily Hoselton or Megan Jones

**20-22 JUNE**

## PCUU 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Campout

**PLEASANT CREEK STATE  
RECREATION AREA  
GROUP CAMPSITE**

**BEACH, GAMES, CRAFTS AND MORE!  
ALL AGES WELCOME, NO OVERNIGHT  
CAMPING REQUIRED!**

**CALL OR TEXT LU WILCOX AT  
573-356-5722 FOR DETAILS.**





We're excited to announce the launch of the **Sacred Listening Initiative** — a congregation-wide effort to build relationships, strengthen trust, and deepen our sense of belonging and community.

Starting now and lasting through August, members of the Sacred Listening Team will be reaching out to engage you in one-on-one conversations — not surveys or interviews, but **genuine moments of listening and connection**.

This initiative is more than just a check-in. It's a powerful tool for building the kind of healthy relationships and relevant community that grow from shared values and mutual self-interest. By listening with **care** and **curiosity**, we hope to discover what truly matters most — to you, to each other, and to the future of Peoples Church.

**We invite you to say yes when a team member reaches out.** These conversations are sacred not only in intent, but in impact — helping us nurture the kind of beloved community we all stand for.

Yours, Sacred Listening Team

Chair, Laura McGraw



Today's world can feel like a relentless furnace. Our Stewardship theme this year invites you to remember that despite the challenges we face — the pervasive disagreement, disconnection, and division — we are stronger **together** and continue to **rise up** against social injustice.

Our goal is **\$210,000** to support the church's operating budget next year. You will be receiving a letter discussing the campaign, a financial commitment form and a blue self-addressed stamped envelope the first week of July. Also included in the mailing will be a new giving guide to replace the UUA Fair Share one.

# STILL WE RISE



# PEOPLES CHURCH

## UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

presents

# Susie Tierney

from



**Sunday, June 8th at 9:45 a.m.**  
**Ely Room (1st Floor)**

**4980 Gordon Ave NW**  
**Cedar Rapids, IA**



# **FREEDOM DAY** **JUNETEENTH** **JUNE 19**

We're excited to once again take part in Cedar Rapids' Juneteenth Celebration at NewBo City Market!

This will be our 6th year showing up in support and friendship to the African American community — both here in Cedar Rapids and across the nation. We're looking for volunteers to help staff our booth in 2-hour shifts, including setup and takedown.

As in years past, we'll be inviting visitors to take part in our interactive Ribbon Project — a simple yet powerful act of reflection and hope — and visual symbol of community commitment and shared vision.

Whether you've joined us in the past or this will be your first time, your presence helps Peoples Church show up with love, justice, and solidarity.

Thank you for being part of the ongoing story of inclusion and beloved community.

In shared spirit, Your Social Justice Team



# Interested in Helping Create Worship Services?

This is the time of year when the Worship Arts Team invites new people to join the group.

Worship Artists get to...

- ✓ Offer their grounded presence during Sunday morning services
- ✓ Practice public speaking with authenticity and accessibility in mind
- ✓ Dig into the monthly [themes](#) together
- ✓ Share their reflections within the acceptance of the PCUU community



If you're interested in learning more about the Worship Arts

Team and [co-creating worship](#), contact Rev. Carin at [minister@peoplesuu.org](mailto:minister@peoplesuu.org) by the end of July. We will be holding a Worship Arts retreat on Saturday, August 16, 2025 from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

## Finance Update

The Finance Team met on 5/13/25 to review financial reports and continue financial planning.

Cash flow for April was positive:

Income: \$20,644

Expenses: \$16,109

## Cares of the Congregation



Susan Elliott-Bryan recently returned home to receive hospice care. As of this writing, she welcomes visitors.

Please make arrangements to visit Susan by texting her son Alex, whose phone number is (323) 360-4809

# Music of the Month

June's Hymn of the Month is "[Circle Round for Freedom](#)"



Our exclusively curated song from Lea Morris for June is a song called "[Keep Moving.](#)"





# Memories from New Member & Flower Ceremony Service!





**Thank you to everyone who joined us for the Spring Clean Event!**





- 1      Worship at 11:00 a.m.
- 4      *Rev. Carin returns from vacation leave*
- 8      Worship at 11:00 a.m.
- 9      *Rev. Carin out on vacation leave*
- 10     Archives Committee at 10:00 a.m.
- 15     Worship at 11:00 a.m.
- 16     *Rev. Carin returns from vacation leave and will be  
working offsite through June 23*
- 17     Finance Team at 7:00 p.m.
- 18     General Assemble in Baltimore, MD
- Social Justice Team at 1:00 p.m.
- 20     PCUU Annual Campout
- Voice Content Due at 12:00 p.m.
- 22     Worship at 11:00 a.m.
- 24     Sacred Listening Team at 7:00 p.m.
- 25     Shared Ministry Team at 9:00 a.m.
- 26     PCUU Board Meeting at 6:30 p.m.
- 29     Worship at 11:00 a.m.

**June**



# PEOPLES CHURCH

## MISSION STATEMENT

“Leading compassionate lives through spiritual growth and just action.”

### Our Staff

**Minister**

Rev. Carin Bringelson (she/hers)  
[minister@peoplesuu.org](mailto:minister@peoplesuu.org)

**Congregational Administrator**

David Kind (he/his)  
[office@peoplesuu.org](mailto:office@peoplesuu.org)

**Office Hours**

Tuesday through Thursday  
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**Interim Director of Faith Formation**

Bridget Laflin, M.Div. (she/hers)  
[faithformation@peoplesuu.org](mailto:faithformation@peoplesuu.org)

**Office Hours**

Tuesday & Thursday  
9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.  
(and by appointment)

**Social Media / IT Outreach Technician**

Matthew Wilde  
[pcuutech@peoplesuu.org](mailto:pcuutech@peoplesuu.org)

**Worship Accompanist**

Judy Mitschelen

**Choir Accompanist**

Andrew Stoneking

### QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS:

[office@peoplesuu.org](mailto:office@peoplesuu.org) or

(319) 362-9827

### Our Board of Trustees

**President**

Robyn Miessler-Kubaneck

Bob Butikofer  
Sue Davis  
Emily Hoselton  
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Josh Wagner  
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Rev. Carin Bringelson  
Gary McGraw, Treasurer



## STILL WE RISE

